

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS
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PUBLIC AFFAIRS ADVISORY GROUP

FACT SHEET

The Public Affairs Advisory Group (PAAG) was established on 15 August 1978 to:

- provide for an Agency-wide exchange of information and ideas related to the Public Affairs role; and
- to assist in organizing and maintaining a Speakers Bureau.

Background:

The Public Affairs Office is in daily contact with offices throughout the Agency obtaining appropriate responses to queries from the media and the public. The office also responds to numerous queries from employees on a wide range of questions concerning the media. Contacts with employees frequently reveal areas of misunderstanding and sometimes misinterpretation of public affairs. Sometimes (but not often enough) employees make suggestions and generate ideas that are used to good advantage.

With the establishment of PAAG, the opportunity for a regular exchange of ideas will enhance the consistency, articulation, and informed judgements that shape the Agency's public affairs.

The public attention which CIA has received in recent years has caused a rush of requests for Agency speakers to address a wide variety of audiences. Many requests represent important opportunities to tell the story of U.S. foreign intelligence, to describe the role of the DCI in government, and to generally put the Agency's best foot forward. Lack of organization and resources cause us to turn down many more speaking requests than we are able to accept.

The Speakers Bureau could provide assistance, briefing aids, travel information, background material, and current policy statements to Agency speakers. A well-informed and well-supplied speakers bureau would greatly enhance the way CIA comes across to the public, and in the long run, build a better understanding of the Agency.